Letter No 43. Sunday - May 18th

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6 Palestinian Coy. The Buffs
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My own sweet- darling -

Isn't it a ghastly life, being parted & away from eachother? You have spoken two or three times in your letters, about how difficult it is to realise & remember that we were once very happy, together, in our own home & with our darling Lisa. Life has been unreal ever since this war began. The first two months of war, with me working much too hard, & us both wondering if & when the call would come, & if Peter & Dicksons intended to try & get me off or not. And then the call up when I was in Belfast. I shall always blame myself for telephoning you about that, & not waiting until I returned. It must have been an awful shock for you, alone in the house, late at night. I like to think that I have progressed in the feelings of sensibility, instinct, & understanding, since then, when I was too immersed in work & business commerce: at least, I should not jump up now, if I could, about a thing like that. And then the change - from being practically my own master to being junior subaltern of the Re, & being bullyragged about & insulted by Rowley Davenport & Hurst. And then the tragedy of December, & the dreadful tragedy of January. And then all the moving about from place to place, & then coming up & going away again. Dover - Dutton Park - Chelmsford - Catterick - Liverpool - Warren point - embarkation leave, Gobowen - & now this, where you cannot come to. It is now eighteen months since it all began, & all that is left is that we love eachother very dearly & very deeply - which I suppose is much - very much. But oh to be together again. When we are

my darling, we must realise & understand, all the time, that we love each other - I love you & you love me - & that we are happy & lucky. We must always realise it, even if we have to quarrel to do so. But it will be better never to quarrel. Argue & fight, but never quarrel.

But this barren existence away from you, my sweetheart. It is utter misery, & I am consistently miserable & unhappy & just longing for you, there is such a colossal difference between being with you & not being with you. To hear of Peggy & Kennett having a week's leave together - it just makes me sick with envy.

I must go to bed now. I have had a most unsatisfactory Sunday - except that I stayed in bed until 9.0 on this Sunday morning - working & waiting for certain things to happen. But I wanted to write about being miserable - & I wanted to get another letter started, anyway.

Love & kisses - dearest Barbara. xxx. Harry.

Monday - 19 May. This is more of a diary than a letter, because it is now 10-30; & my mosquito net with a bed underneath it, looks very inviting. This morning I was up at 6-30, worked hard, & then, for the first time, was President of a Court Martial at 10-0. Everything went very smoothly, & it was all over at 1.0. It was really too smooth, & I was very annoyed at the poor showing put up by the Defending Officer. You remember how hard I used to work, rushing about on my bicycle with all the books & papers under my arm, & the amount of thought & effort I put into my

cases – so much that I got a rocket from Bloody Davenport & was stopped sleeping out with you – the beast. Well – this young man was milk & water & made no real effort at all. I am going to push in a report tomorrow. All this afternoon, I did this morning's work. And this evening I had to go out & see the Marines about a job. And then I called on my Hospital Ship, which was in again – this time with some scars, having been bombed & machine gunned. And then a most remarkable thing happened. I think in my last letter, I told you about Jack Perrott. Well – I was within 200 yds of the barracks, when I passed three officers, & one of them looked like Jack – but I thought it was impossible & then I stopped my car, deciding it was better to appear foolish than to live in ignorance or uncertainty. They had just gone with a load, but I caught the last one, & said "Is that Perrott" – & it was. It is rather incredible, isn't it? He had been living in that place for 6 weeks. Which shows just how much I get around. We were very pleased to see each other, but I could not stay long, & will be seeing him again in a day or so. And then I had dinner – sandwiched between some more work – & now I am here.

Dear Tony, my second in command has now gone sick, which is no help at all. It is bloody, the way these people cannot take it. I suppose I am very lucky, having such a solid constitution. I must say I feel very well & healthy, & I work 10 times harder than anyone else. I have all the responsibility too. But the last thing I expect to do, is to go sick.

I must be stopping, darling - I feel very sleepy - very dirty too. Chinaman's has a hot bath ready for me. You said in one letter, I was always querying about my allusions! I'm sorry: my sweet, but you told me to be careful & look after myself - bathing seems to be so important. And I enjoy my baths too - I think they are the nearest I get to sex. To see myself naked - & think of all the lovely times we have had - naked - & before, during & after bathing. Sweetheart. And you have instructed me about my hair, too, & I am doing what you told me. Twice a week, I rub oil in like hell, & then wash my hair - it seems fine. It is very annoying, because Vaseline Hair Tonic has now run out in the Middle East. I racked my brains for a substitute, & found there is no similar product. And then I had a brainwave - I think & hope - & I am now using Liquid Paraffin, for the stomach. It is oily, & pure, & does not smell. I was rather pleased with my idea. And now to bed. Hugs & kisses, sweetheart - xxx Harry.

Tuesday - 20th May. I had another p.c. from you today, dated 1st. You reduced me to the rank of Captain, in the address, which was a funny thing to do, darling. And you did not call me darling, or send love & kisses. But - thank goodness - my letters had started again - 6 in one week, as you say, it is ravishing. And I never received your cable to say you had had no letters from me for over 6 weeks. I wonder if you sent it C. M. F. - or whatever it is. They are just useless, & a waste of a bob

And then the news about Amy - she really is a fool. It is obviously another mistake - & she must surely realise that Geoffrey Dawson is a rather unkind & very selfish young man - he has those two bad qualities of Vernon's, & very little of Vernon's charm - & is also rather boring & silly, which Vernon never is. What a girl - I should have thought Christopher was better. Wretched C - I feel sorry for him. How he done anything wrong in particular? - or has Geoffrey just swept her off her feet? It was just like her to forget that you were soon to have a baby, & suggest coming to stay with you, until her silly affairs are in order. I hope you haven't softened your heart & allowed her to come anywhere near you - she would only worry & annoy you.

I am dying to have a call from you, preferably with the news about the baby - but if not that, with news about how you are, & when you expect something to happen. As you have said, darling one, this war has something to answer for, if only that you have had to have two babies alone, without your lawful, wedded husband to support & help you. And especially when we think of the summer when you were having Lisa. That lovely 2 weeks at Llandudno, after my illness. We made love every afternoon & every night, the whole two weeks. Marvellous days. The only blot, do you remember? - was when you had a letter from the young man in the rep. co. with whom you had been supposed to be having lunch in London. Your letters were our one trouble that summer. I was very jealous - but you must admit it was annoying, & you were a bit annoying & bloody independent about it all!

And I remember so clearly, meeting Gordon & Eileen

in Otley that night - & have again when we were in bed - very carefully & very gently. You were sweet to me, my darling. You must have been so lonely & cold in bed, all those months, poor sweetheart. And then the drive to Harrogate - I cannot remember either, only it was the Wolseley & not the Ford. I think the Ford must have been broken, or in for repair. You remember, Keyworth brought your car & Lisa back from the Home.

Those were very happy days... I hope & pray you will be rewarded & compensated with an easy time, this time. If only Lisa & I could be with you. Oh darling. You are quite right - I should have gone to the General about coming out here. What with compassionate grounds & my transfer to the 7th all lined up. Zaq wanting me - I would have stood quite a good chance. And we were foolish to think you might get out here, it is Q.A.I.M.N.S. only. I, too, hope to have some words with Bromley Davenport when I come home.

I keep saying that I will tell you about this barracks - but there is much that I cannot & may not say. & in any case, it is not so interesting. But, it is very large & vast, & I am master of all I survey, - in addition to being O.C. my own Coy, I am now O.C. the Barracks too. This entails much more responsibility & work - but no more pay I am afraid. But it is all the more training & so all to the good - unless I make a mess of things.

Wednesday - May 21st. I'm afraid I dried up rather abruptly last night. But I fell to thinking about you & things

& then felt sleepy, & so went to bed. I seem to have dried up rather in my letter writing capabilities. But so little of interest to you, seems to be happening to me nowadays; sometimes there are things, but they seem so trivial & unimportant, & I'm afraid of you being bored with my letters - but perhaps I had better risk such things, & at least it will be more for you to read from me & about me. Also, I seem to be so dreamy nowadays, & I just sit for ages, gazing at your photographs & at the blank wall in front of me, & wandering about you & what you are doing, & thinking of the past, & imagining, & doing my best to, the future. And I never waste any time nowadays, by dropping off to sleep, in that bad way which I used to at home. Except the other evening, when I went for dinner with the Royal Navy Commander, when I went off into a kind of a doze after dinner. But I had three stonking Plymouth Gins before, beer with, & brandy after dinner. & it was a very small cabin, & no window (or port hole) open at all, on account of the black out, just a fan, churning up the foul air, & four men all smoking hard. And the conversation became very dull & nautical too - but I enjoyed it all the same. There was another Naval Commander there, who I know quite well & a little Major, from the Royal Engineers, who used to be in the 4th Bn, years ago & before my time. We finally went out into the town for some beer, where I had not enough money to buy a round, so that was fine. The other commander was R.N.R. - that is, reserve - & was in the films business in civil life. I had been talking to him previously, about British Dominion films, & their foul shares. He said they were the most awful ramp,

like several other of those film companies. The same man also paid me a nice compliment. For a time, I had been finding some fairly important guards, which had to do with him. Changes were being made, & he apparently got a bit browned off with being pushed about, & told the Army H.Q. people here, that if Massey was running it, that was alright otherwise he would want to know a lot more about it. So I said thankyou very much.

The following night I went to the cinema with Rosemary & his wife, who was up for the week end. The film was "Remember", with Robert Taylor & Greer Garson. It was very amusing indeed, & I thoroughly enjoyed it. Greer Garson really is charming & lovely. You remember, I saw her for the first time in "Pride & Prejudice" in Capetown, & was very much impressed. She seems so intelligent, & has so much poise. In fact of which, she is like you, my darling - though you are not at all alike to look at.

I think I must bring this rather disjointed letter to an end now - & send it away to you in the morning. I do pray that I hear from you about the baby in a day or two, & that I really will be able to write to you. Everything will be alright - but I am, even so, terribly anxious & nervous. You have had so much to bear in the last 1½ years, & you must not be asked to bear any more. You sweet darling, why should you, of all people, have to. And I love you so very much, & nothing must go wrong to hurt you or to hurt the baby. You are everything in all the world to me darling. There is nothing & nobody, which would or could make me stay alive, if anything were to happen to you. Bless you, sweetest, for all you have done for me, & for making me so happy. Harry.

xxxx

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